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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 DUBLIN 000436

SIPDIS

S/WCI FOR AMB. WILLIAMSON

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [CJAN](#) [EUN](#) [KJUS](#) [KTIA](#) [EI](#)  
SUBJECT: IRELAND WILLING TO CONSIDER RESETTLING GUANTANAMO  
DETAINEES

REF: DUBLIN 223

Classified By: Acting Pol/Econ Chief Dwight Nystrom. Reasons 1.4 (b/d)  
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11. (S) Summary: On July 15, 2008 Ambassador-at Large for War Crimes Issues Clint Williamson met Michael Flahive, Assistant Secretary in the Irish Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, and Darach Mac Fhoinnbhairr (MAC-FIN-BAR), Director, America,s Section, Department of Foreign Affairs to determine whether Ireland would consider resettling detainees from the U.S. military base at Guantanamo Bay. Both officials raised genuine concerns, but agreed to consider the case files of 23 low-threat detainees who cannot be returned to their home countries for fear that they will be tortured or killed. Mac Fhionnbhairr commented that the Minister of Foreign Affairs had already decided to consider the resettlement, though the Minister of Justice would be the final arbiter. The GOI has not yet decided to accept detainees; however, they are willing to look at a dossier of detainees and are actively considering the request. Williamson's demarche was an encouraging start. End summary.

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The View of the Justice Department  
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12. (S) During his meeting with Flahive, Ambassador Williamson reviewed the status of the Guantanamo detainees, noting that 23 of the 270 detainees have been cleared by the Department of Defense for transfer or release, but could not be returned to their home countries for fear of mistreatment. This group includes 16 Uighurs, four Uzbeks, an Egyptian, a Somali, and a West Bank Palestinian. Williamson proposed the resettlement of one or more individuals (to be determined by the GoI) in Ireland.

13. (S) Flahive asked what would be required of Ireland. Williamson replied that Ireland would need to apply its own law, possible job and language training, and maintain contact with the individuals to ensure that they did not slip back into a terrorist mold for lack of other opportunities. (Note: Ireland has a very effective refugee resettlement program run by the Reception and Integration Agency in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. End note.) In response to Flahive's statement that Ireland will not want anyone who did not want to be relocated to Ireland, Williamson assured him that no detainee would be resettled involuntarily.

14. (S) Williamson pointed out that a number of issues raised by Flahive would have to worked through, such as international travel allowances/restrictions; family reunification requests; long-term medical treatment; the radicalization threat of the detainees; and the possibility that resettled detainees would use their freedom in Ireland and their accessibility to a free press to harangue the United States, or in the case of the Uighurs, China.

15. (S) Flahive noted that most of the detainees proposed for resettlement were ethnic Uighurs and asked about China's view. Williamson acknowledged that in the case of Albania, where eight detainees, including five Uighurs, had been resettled, the Chinese had protested through a diplomatic note, though no other repercussions had been forthcoming. It clearly has not been a long-term irritant in Chinese-Albanian relations. Williamson went on to point out that Chinese authorities had threatened to execute the Uighur detainees if they were returned to China, saying that the U.S. Government was seeking the resettlement of the Uighurs in countries such as Ireland that can effectively resist Chinese pressure to deport the Uighurs to China. Williamson pointed out that other European countries were seriously considering accepting detainees and that the EU's foreign policy chief Javier Solana was supportive of the effort.

16. (S) In the end, Flahive agreed to consider the case files of the 23 lower-threat detainees. Williamson undertook to release the confidential files on the 23 individuals to the Government of Ireland as soon as possible. He also offered to facilitate a visit by Irish authorities to Guantanamo to interview any individual detainees they were considering accepting.

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The View of the Department of Foreign Affairs  
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17. (S) During his meeting with Mac Fhionnbhairr, Ambassador Williamson again reviewed the status of the detainees. Mac

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Fhionnbhairr raised most of the same concerns as Flahive. Somewhat more cautious in his statements than Flahive, Mac Fhionnbhairr nonetheless quickly got down to the specifics of how such a transfer would work. When Mac Fhionnbhairr asked if the United States was making a formal request; Williamson responded that the Irish Government should consider his demarche such a request. As the meeting ended, Mac Fhionnbhairr stated that Micheal Martin, Minister of Foreign Affairs, had already decided to consider the request to take detainees. Nonetheless, Mac Fhionnbhairr said, the final decision would lie with Dermot Ahern, the Minister of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. (Note: Dermot Ahern, Foreign Minister from September 2004-May 2008, is noted for his humanitarian initiatives. End note.)

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Comment  
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18. (S) The question of accepting detainees had clearly been discussed at high levels prior to the meeting. The Irish officials were prepared, appeared ready to listen, clearly understood Williamson's arguments, and seemed somewhat favorably disposed to the demarche. One of Flahive's staffers was toting, and used, a thick file. Flahive, pointing out that Ireland had a robust annual refugee intake (though UNHCR) and had accepted 11 Cuban refugees from the United States who had been sheltering at Guantanamo (reftel), was at pains to assure Williamson that his questions were not intended to sound "pessimistic" about Ireland's willingness to accept detainees. Mac Fhionnbhairr's comment that the Minister of Foreign Affairs had already decided to consider the resettlement was particularly telling. The GOI has not yet decided to accept detainees; however, they are willing to look at a dossier of detainees and are actively considering the request. Ambassador Williamson's demarche was an encouraging start.

19. (S) This cable has been cleared by Ambassador Williamson.  
FOLEY